

**KEY
QUESTIONS:**

What
happened
because of the
project?

What impact
did it have?

EVALUATING YOUR LSTA PROJECT

Information that follows is based on IMLS guidance that is available at <http://www.imls.gov/applicants/resources.shtm>.

What are the benefits of evaluation? It can:

- ♦ Increase participation
- ♦ Improve services
- ♦ Leverage funds

What should reports say?

- ♦ We wanted to do what
- ♦ We did what
- ♦ So what

Report Elements	
Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ What did we use? ♦ How much did we spend? ♦ How much did we consume?
Activities and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ What did we do?
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ How many units did we deliver? ♦ To whom? (audience characteristics)
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ What did we achieve for our target audience?

Reports do what?

- ♦ Summarize participant characteristics
- ♦ Summarize inputs, activities/services, outputs and outcomes
- ♦ Respond to influencers' needs for information
- ♦ Compare data from program start or previous period
- ♦ Interpret results and make recommendations

Evaluation reports:

- ♦ Describe outcomes as benefits to a project's targeted group
- ♦ Document observations that credibly demonstrate change or desirable conditions
- ♦ Document the success of achieving performance goals
- ♦ Communicate the value of your LSTA project

Steps to incorporate outcomes evaluation:

- ♦ Develop the outcomes strategy with key people and build an action time line.
- ♦ In user satisfaction surveys ask customers to indicate ways in which information from the library affected key decision-making areas.
- ♦ Use focus groups and observation of the everyday world of library customers. Identify observable and measurable behaviors or conditions. For example, a project designed to allow a library to share on-line history resources may have an intended outcome of increasing the comfort level of teachers with using the new on-line resources. The indicator is the # and % of teachers who report feeling at least 50% more at ease with using the new resource.
- ♦ Keep a record of situations in which individual customers have told you about how they used information from the library. Ask the customer to send a brief email or note about it.
- ♦ Use the interview method to fully understand a customer's impressions or experiences.
- ♦ Use the observation method to gather information about how a program actually works. This method can adapt to events as they occur.
- ♦ Collect outcome information at specific intervals, e.g., every 6 months, at the end of an activity or phase, at follow-up, or at program start and end for comparison when increases in skill, behavior, or knowledge are expected.